



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10

1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 900
Seattle, WA 98101-3140

OFFICE OF THE
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

February 7, 2011

Colonel Reinhard Koenig
US Army Corps of Engineers, Alaska District
P.O. Box 6898
JBER, Alaska 99506

Dear Colonel Koenig:

In 2010, a number of tribes and tribal entities in Southwest Alaska requested that EPA begin a public process under Clean Water Act Section 404(c) in relation to metallic sulfide mining in the Bristol Bay watershed. Other Alaska tribes and tribal entities requested that we let the typical permitting process for mines run its course. I have decided to initiate a watershed assessment of Bristol Bay, focusing primarily on the Kvichak and Nushagak drainages. I am writing to inform you of that decision and request your assistance. The assessment will characterize the risks of large-scale developments on the Bristol Bay salmon fishery, and evaluate measures to protect the watersheds and ensure the sustainability of that fishery. We will conduct this risk assessment in an open, public format as was requested. The overall process will include:

- Collection and evaluation of scientific and technical information;
- Opportunities for tribal, state and federal experts to participate in review of the information;
- Public meetings; and
- Tribal consultation

There are many details to be worked out but I would greatly appreciate assistance from your agency in conducting this watershed assessment. For your information, I am enclosing an outline of our draft watershed assessment process. I have scheduled a meeting of the appropriate federal agencies during the Alaska Forum on the Environment. I look forward to discussing this with you. Please feel free to call me or Richard Parkin, our EPA lead for conducting this risk assessment. Mr. Parkin can be reached at (206)553-8574. He will be available at the Alaska Forum on the Environment to discuss this effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis J. McLerran".

Dennis J. McLerran,
Regional Administrator